

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 BIB-01 SMS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 /081 W
-----067447 220326Z /14

R 211835Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL FLORENCE
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2126
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE (POUCH)
AMCONSUL TURIN (POUCH)

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IT
SUBJECT: SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST CLASHES IN THE RED BELT

1. THE PROBLEM OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES HAS BEEN A TOPIC FOR MOST OF THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS IN THE RED BELT. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE CONFLICTS ARE BECOMING MORE ACUTE. INDEED SEVERAL CASES HAVE ALREADY ERUPTED INTO OPEN CLASHES DESPITE EFFORTS TO REPRESS OR CONCEAL THE DIFFERENCES. MOST RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN PUBLIC CLASHES IN THE TOWN COUNCILS OF GREVE, SCANDICCI, PRATO, MONTELUPO, MONTEMURLO, FIESOLE, SAN CASCIANO AND VINCI, IN THE FLORENCE PROVINCE ALONE. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD ABOUT OPEN CLASHES IN THE CITY GOVERNMENTS OF RIMINI, PARMA AND PIACENZA. THE PCI AND PSI HAVE HAD SERIOUS DIFFERENCES IN THE TUSCAN REGIONAL GIUNTA AS WELL AS THE FLORENCE CITY AND PROVINCIAL GIUNTAS.

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2. RECENTLY FOUR OFFICIALS OF THE FLORENCE PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO EXPLOIT PSI/PCI DIFFERENCES.

THEY CALLED THE PSI/PCI CONFLICTS THE MOST SERIOUS SINCE WORLD WAR TWO AND SUGGESTED THAT THE DIFFERENCES BE AIDED

IN THE FLORENCE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BECAUSE QUOTE THESE CONFLICTS IMPOSE GRAVE DAMAGE ON THE CITIES DUE TO THE RESULTANT PARALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE A CONSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE UNQUOTE. ONE DC REPRESENTATIVE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THESE EIGHT CONFLICTS ARE QUOTE ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG UNQUOTE.

3. THE PRECISE CAUSE OF THESE CONFLICTS IS STILL IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH ALTHOUGH THE OSTENSIBLE CAUSES CITED ARE: A. PSI SUPPORT FOR SOVIET DISSENTERS AND RELATED DD ATTACKS UPON THE USSR, B. PATRONAGE DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN THE TWO ALLIED PARTIES, C. IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS ACCENTUATED BY THE RECENT CRAXI/BERLINGUER DEBATES, D. COMPETITION FOR VOTES IN THE SAME LEFTIST CONSTITUENCIES EXACERBATED BY PCI ANXIETIES OVER LOSSES IN THE MOST RECENT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS, E. PCI ANGER OVER PSI PUBLIC CRITICISM OF PCI OFFICIALS SERVING IN PSI/PCI COALITION LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. ALL OF THESE PROVIDE ADEQUATE REASONS FOR INTER-PARTY CLASHES BUT THERE STILL APPEAR TO BE OTHER HIDDEN FACTORS BEHIND THE CONFLICTS.

4. IT IS IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE THAT NONE OF THESE CONFLICTS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED DEFINITELY. WITH THE RESUMPTION OF FULL-TIME POLITICAL ACTIVITY BEGINNING SEPTEMBER, IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO EXPECT A RESUMPTION IF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT AN INCREASE IN THESE CONFLICTS. SOCIALISTS SAY THE TROUBLE IS COMING ENTIRELY FROM THE PCI CONSCIOUSLY PROVOKING FIGHTS, AND ALTHOUGH THE PSI LEVERAGE IS LIMITED, PARTY OFFICIALS ASSERT THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO CARRY ON THE BATTLE AS LONG AS NECESSARY AND GO AS FAR AS NECESSARY TO DEFEND THEIR POSITION. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THEY ALSO EXPRESS THE HOPE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE PCI CAN BE COMPOSED. THE PSI SHARES POWER WITH THE PCI IN 35 OF THE 51 CITY GOVERNMENTS IN FLORENCE PROVINCE BUT IN MOST OF THE 35 TOWNS, THE PCI HAS A MAJORITY WITHOUT PSI VOTES. THE CITY OF FLORENCE, THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL CAPITAL HOWEVER IS ONE OF THE FEW BIG CITIES IN THE RED BELT WHERE THE PCI NEEDS THE PSI TO CONTROL THE CITY GOVERNMENT.

GORDON

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